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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR AF

SUBJECT: LIBYAN RELATIONS WITH BLACK AFRICA

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE SKETCHES THE CONTEXT IN WHICH
LIBYAN RELATIONS WITH BLACK AFRICA ARE CONDUCTED.
THREE STRANDS OF EXPANSIONISM, NASSERIST IDEOLOGY,
AND ISLAM COMBINE TO MAKE A POWERFUL JUSTIFICATION IN
THE MINDS OF QADHAFI AND HIS COLLEAGUES FOR A FORWARD
POLICY IN AFRICA, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SURPLUS
OIL REVENUES FOR DISCRETIONARY SPENDING GIVES THEM
THE LEVERAGE NECESSARY TO PUT THEIR THEORIES INTO
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PRACTICE. IN THE CASE OF NEIGHBORING REGIMES TO

THE SOUTH, PARTICULARLY CHAD AND NIGER, THE REGIME HAS EXPANSIONIST AMBITIONS; WITH OTHER AFRICAN STATES IN WHICH A MUSLIM POPULATION IS PRESENT, THE LIBYANS BELIEVE THEY HAVE A RELIGIOUS DUTY TO PROMOTE MUSLIM POLITICAL INFLUENCE. IN ALL CASES, THE LIBYAN REGIME WANTS ITS AFRICAN RELATIONS TO TAKE A RADICAL, PRO-ARAB LINE AT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AND AT THE UN. BUREAUCRATIC SLIPPAGE AND POLITICAL FRICTIONS MAKE LIBYAN PERFORMANCE UNEVEN, AND AID TO BLACK AFRICAN IS UNPOPULAR DOMESTICALLY. THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF RACISM IN THIS, AS THERE IS IN THE REGIME'S OFTEN CONDESCENDING ATTITUDE TO AFRICAN LEADERS. NEVERTHELESS, THE LINE OF AFRICAN SUITORS FOR LIBYAN MONEY SHOWS NO SIGN OF SHORTENING, AND QADHAFI WILL CONTINUE TO USE THE LEVERAGE THIS GIVES HIM RUTHLESSLY AND EFFECTIVELY. END SUMMARY.

1. LIBYA'S AFRICAN POLICY DERIVES FROM THREE SOURCES: AN INTEREST IN SECURING AND EXTENDING ITS SOUTHERN BORDER IN THE SAHARA; QADHAFI'S NASSERIST IDEOLOGY, ONE TENET OF WHICH IS THAT IT IS THE DUTY OF ATHE ARAB REVOLUTIONARY TO SUPPORT AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND TO BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS BETWEEN AFRICANS AND ARABS ERECTED BY COLONIALISM; AND A MISSIONARY VOCATION TO SPREAD THE BANNER OF ISLAM TO THE HEATHEN LANDS IN THE SOUTH, AS PREACHED BY THE SANUSIYA SECT WHICH MADE THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL LIBYAN CONSCIOUSNESS. THESE THREE STRANDS OF EXPANSIONISM, IDEOLOGY, AND ISLAM ARE NOT ALWAYS DISTINGUISHABLE IN PRACTICE, BUT TOGETHER THEY MAKE POWERFUL EMOTIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR A FORWARD LIBYAN POLICY IN AFRICA IN THE MINDS OF QADHAFI AND HIS COLLEAGUES. THIS WOULD NOT BE OF MUCH IMPORTANCE, IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE FACT THAT THE REGIME HAS ENORMOUS RESOURCES ON WHICH IT CAN CALL IN THE FORM OF OIL REVENUES OF 6-8 BILLION PER YEAR, OF WHICH A LARGE PART IS AVAILABLE FOR DISCRETIONARY SPENDING. THIS, ALONG WITH THE READINESS OF MANY AFRICAN LEADERS TO BE TEMPTED, GIVES THE LIBYANS AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY TO PUT THEORY INTO PRACTICE

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AND PLAY A ROLE IN AFRICA.

2. THE LIBYANS WANT DIFFERENT THINGS FROM DIFFERENT AFRICAN STATES. IN BORDERING NIGER, AND CHAD, THEY WANT COMPLAISANT REGIMES WHICH WILL TURN A BLIND EYE TO THEIR MILITARY EXPANSION TOWARD THE SOUTH. IN COUNTRIES WITH NORTHERN BORDERS ON THE SAHARA OR A PARTLY MUSLIM POLULATION, LIKE THE CAR, CAMEROON, NIGERIA,

GUINEAN, SENEGAL, SIERRA LEONE, AND GAMBIA, THEY WANT AN INCREASE IN MUSLIM INFLUENCE MORE THAN RADICALIZED POLITICS. MOST IMPORTANT FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, QADHAFI WANTS AFRICAN NATIONS TO TAKE A RADICAL PRO-ARAB LINE IN MULTILATERAL CAUCUSES AND AT THE UN, AND HE IS ABLE TO SWING A GOOD DEAL OF WEIGHT WITH THE SMALLER AFRICAN STATES IN THIS DIRECTION.

3. THE MEANS THE LIBYAN REGIME USES TO ACHIEVE THERE END IS, OF COURSE, THE PROMISE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. A VERY SMALL SUM, IN TERMS OF LIBYAN REVENUES, CAN BE A VERY LARGE SUM FOR A FINANCIALLY STRAPPED AFRICAN STATE, AND THIS GIVES THE LIBYANS CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE. LIBYAN MONEY IS EITHER PASSED TO AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS THROUGH OPENLY NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS INVOLVING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT ENTERPRISES, OR GIVEN SECRETLY TO AFRICAN LEADERS FOR USE AS THEY SEE FIT, ALWAYS IN BOTH CASES IN RETURN FOR POLITICAL COMMITMENTS. BECAUSE OF THE INADEQUACY OF THE BUREAUCRATIC MACHINERY, BECAUSE AID AGREEMENTS ARE USUALLY NEGOTIATED IN HASTE AT OR NEAR THE SUMMIT, BECAUSE THE LIBYANS OFTEN INSIST ON SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENT INVOLVED HAS CONFRUCTIONS WHICH ARISE IN THE INTERVAL, ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS OFTEN FALL APART BEFORE THE PROMISED LIBYAN FUNDS ARE TRANSFERRED. THIS HAS HAPPENED IN THE CASE OF RWANDA, NIGER, AND MALI, TO TAKE THREE EXAMPLES. THE BUREAUCRATIC PROBLEMS OF MONITORING SUCH AGREEMENTS BECAME SO SEVERE ON THE LIBYAN SIDE IN 1975 THAT A SPECIAL OFFICE IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS CREATED TO FOLLOW UP AGREEMENTS WITH AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS. WE KNOW MUCH LESS ABOUT DIRECT, SECRET LIBYAN HANDOUTS TO AFRICAN LEADERS, BUT WE SUSPECT THAT THEY ARE MORE PREVALENT THAN IS CONFIDENTIAL

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USUALLY THOUGHT. ONE INSTANCE WHICH HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION IS THAT OF TOMBALBAYE IN CHAD, WHO HAS RELIABLY REPORTED TO HAVE IN EFFECT CEDED A LARGE AREA IN THE NORTH OF HIS COUNTRY TO QADHAFI IN RETURN FOR WHAT AMOUNTED TO A LARGE LIBYAN BRIBE. WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THIS WERE THE ONLY INSTANCE OF ITS KIND.

4. HANDOUTS TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE EXTREMELY UNPOPULAR WITH ORDINARY LIBYANS. QADHAFI TRIED TO MEET CRITICISM IN THIS REGARD DURING THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IN JANUARY. YOU ACCUSE ME, HE TOLD THE DELEGATES, OF FILLING UP THE TRAVELLING BAGS OF VERY AFRICAN LEADER WHO COMES TO VISIT WITH MONEY, BUT I TELL YOU THAT LIBYA IS THE MEANEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. QADHAFI THEN READ A LIST OF AGREEMENTS WITH AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS, POINTING

OUT THAT HIS POLICY WAS TO GIVE AID ONLY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF JOINT COMPANIES, AND THAT OFTEN AID WAS IN THE FORM OF INTEREST-BEARING LOANS. AS A RESULT OF THIS ATTITUDE, THE AMOUNTS OF LIBYAN AID TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE NOT LONGER BEING MADE PUBLIC HERE.

5. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED, IF ONLY IN PASSING, THAT THERE ARE STRONG ELEMENTS OF RACISM BOTH IN THE RESISTANCE OF ORDINARY LIBYANS TO SUB SAHARAN AFRICAN SPENDING BY THE REGIME AND IN THE REGIME' OWN CONDESCENDING AND PATRONIZING ATTITUDE TO THE AFRICAN PRESIDENTS AND MINISTERS WHO VISIT TRIPOLI. WE RECALL WATCHING QADHAFI AND JALLUD MAKE FUN OF PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE OF SOMALIA BEHIND HIS BACK WHILE HE WAS MAKING WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A FIERY SPEECH IN SOMALI, AND QADHAFI'S 1974 DECISION NOT TO MEET CHIEFS OF STATE AT THE AIRPORT CAME AFTER A PROCESSION OF AFRICAN PRESIDENTS TO TRIPOLI. AFRICAN LEADERS MUST OFTER FIND THIS BARELY CONCEALED "LITTLE BLACK BROTHER-ATTITUDE THOUGH TO SWALLOW.

6. NEVERTHELESS, DESPITE OCCASIONAL DISSILLUSIONMENT AT LIBYAN FAILURE TO KEEP PROMISES, AND LIBYAN-AFRICAN RACIAL TENSIONS, THERE CONTINUES TO BE NO LACK OF AFRICAN SUITORS FOR LIBYAN MONEY. OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS, EIGHT AFRICAN CHIEFS OF STATE FROM
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TOGO, GAMBIA, RWANDA, UGANDA, SIERRA LEONE, CAMEROON AND GUINEA-BISSAU HAVE VIISTED TRIPOLI. IN ADDITION, OVER THE LAST THREE MONTHS ALONE, AT LEAST THIRTEEN AFRICAN MINISTERIAL DELEGATIONS HAVE BEEN HERE. THE PROSPECT IS THAT AS LONG AS THE AFRICAN APPETITE FOR LIBYAN MONEY REMAINS KEEN, QADHAFI AND HIS COLLEAGUES WILL CONTINUE TO USE THE LEVERAGE THIS GIVES THEM RUTHLESSLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

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